

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for two Youth Leadership Programs: the Youth Leadership Program with South Asia (Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives) and the Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals for reciprocal exchange programs for high school students and adult participants. For the Youth Leadership Program with South Asia, hereinafter referred to as Program A, applicants should plan to recruit and select

approximately 30 youth and adult participants in the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the United States. For the Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan, hereinafter referred to as Program B, applicants should plan to recruit and select approximately 105-125 youth and adult participants in Azerbaijan and in the United States. In both programs, applicants will provide the participants with substantive three-week exchanges in the partner countries that focus broadly on the themes of civic rights and responsibilities, youth leadership development, respect for diversity, and community activism. Activities will be geared toward preparing participants to conduct projects at home that serve a community need.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

Authority: Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and

achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation. The funding authority for the program with Azerbaijan is provided through a transfer from Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) funding.

Purpose: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) Youth Leadership Programs enable teenagers (ages 15-17) and adult educators to participate in intensive, thematic exchanges. Exchange activities must focus broadly on civic rights and responsibilities, youth leadership development, respect for diversity, and community activism. Specific topics, such as the environment, media literacy, health, or entrepreneurial initiatives, will be used as tools to illustrate those concepts. Participants will be engaged in a variety of activities such as workshops, community and/or school-based programs, cultural activities, seminars and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals and objectives. Ample opportunities for the exchange participants to interact with their peers in the host country will be included. The

program will prepare the participants to apply and share their exchange experiences upon their return home.

The goals of the programs are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the United States and the people of other countries;
- 2) Inspire a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to community development among youth;
- 3) Develop a cadre of community activists who will share their knowledge and skills with their peers through positive action; and
- 4) Foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups.

The objectives of the programs are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy;
- 2) Demonstrate critical thinking and leadership skills; and
- 3) Demonstrate skill at developing project ideas and planning a course of action to bring the projects to fruition.

The primary themes of the programs are:

- 1) Civic Rights and Responsibilities (including citizen participation, grassroots democracy and rule of law);
- 2) Youth Leadership Development (such as team building, public speaking, negotiation, goal setting and project planning);
- 3) Respect for Diversity (including ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities); and
- 4) Community Activism (social/corporate responsibility, volunteerism, and philanthropy)

For each program, applicant organizations must focus on these primary themes. In addition, applicants should identify specific topics, such as the environment, media literacy, health, or entrepreneurial initiatives, and describe how these topics will serve to illustrate the more abstract concepts of the primary themes. For example, the specific topic of the environment could be used to examine community activism and civic responsibility by demonstrating how a group of individuals with an idea can start a recycling campaign in their community.

Applicants should identify their own specific objectives and measurable outputs and outcomes based on these program goals and the specifications provided in this solicitation.

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity for implementing programs of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of programs that address the goals and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working with the relevant geographic region, either Eurasia or South Asia. In addition to their U.S. presence, applicants, or their partner organizations, need to have the necessary capacity in South Asia or Azerbaijan to recruit, select, and provide follow-on activities for local participants, and to provide a content-rich exchange program for the American participants. Applicants or their partner organizations must have a functioning office and an established track record of working with youth or on issues in local education in the participating countries of Azerbaijan or Nepal and Sri Lanka. The partner organization is not required to have an office in the Maldives, but should demonstrate their ability to recruit, select, and provide follow-on activities for the Maldivian participants. The representative(s) in the host countries

should have an active role in the preparation of the proposal submitted in response to this RFGP. The Bureau recommends that Program A applicants consult with the U.S. Embassies in Kathmandu and Colombo prior to submitting their proposal for help in identifying or vetting in-country partners. [Note that the U.S. Embassy in Colombo oversees activities in both Sri Lanka and the Maldives.] Program B applicants should consult with the U.S. Embassy in Baku to learn about existing educational programs. Please consult with the ECA Program Officer for contact information.

ECA intends to award one cooperative agreement for each program. Organizations may submit only one proposal, for either Program A or Program B. Proposals for the two programs will be judged independently and will be compared only to proposals for the same region.

Program A Guidelines: Youth Leadership Program with South Asia

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2011, pending the availability of funds. The award period will be approximately 14 to 18 months in duration, according to the applicant's program design. Applicants

should propose the timing of the exchange delegations: one South Asian delegation traveling to the United States and one or two American delegations traveling to South Asia. Each delegation will travel for three weeks. The exchanges will take place in 2012. Applicants should propose the period of the exchanges based on the timeframes noted above. Dates may be shifted by the mutual agreement of the Department and the award recipient.

The amount of ECA funding available is projected to be \$300,000.

The program will be offered for approximately 30 participants: 18-24 students and educators from South Asia and 8-12 students and educators from the United States. The ratio of students to adult participants should be approximately 7:1.

The South Asian participants will travel as a regional delegation with equal representation of the three participating countries: the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Exchange activities should take place in English; therefore, proficiency in English should be a requirement

for selection, particularly as it will enhance interaction with American peers.

The American participants will be 8-12 high school students and educators that represent the diversity of the United States and who demonstrate an interest in South Asia and the project themes. Applicants must present a well-justified plan for how they will arrange the Americans' travel to the region. The Bureau does not anticipate that all of the U.S. participants will travel to all three countries; for instance, some Americans may travel to only one country while others travel to the other countries.

Program B Guidelines: Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2011. The cooperative agreement period will be approximately 20 to 30 months in duration, according to the applicant's program design. Applicants should propose the timing of multiple exchange delegations to be sent to the United States or Azerbaijan in manageable group sizes throughout the award period. Each delegation will travel for three weeks. Proposals should account for four to six delegations: three to five Azerbaijani delegations

traveling to the United States and one or two American delegations traveling to Azerbaijan. Each delegation should focus on the program goals and objectives, but all delegations do not need to focus on the same programmatic themes or topics. The exchanges will take place in 2012 and 2013. Dates may be shifted by the mutual agreement of the Department and the award recipient.

The amount of ECA funding available is projected to be \$1,011,500.

An applicant should present the number of participants within the range of 105-125 it expects to be able to accommodate based on its program design and budget. The ratio of students to adult participants should be approximately 7:1.

The Azerbaijani participants will travel in three to five delegations of 15 to 30 students and educators each. Programs should take place in English; therefore, fluency in English should be a requirement for selection, particularly as it will enhance interaction with American peers.

An applicant should describe a robust participant recruitment strategy for selection of Azerbaijani participants. The overall strategy should address ways to successfully recruit both Azerbaijani educators and students from all across the country, including representatives from the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, geographical exclave of Azerbaijan. Likewise, the applicant should demonstrate a recruitment plan that adds synergy to existing U.S. Government-funded education programs in Azerbaijan that target at underserved populations.

The American participants will travel in one or two delegations of 15 to 30 high school students and educators each that represent the diversity of the United States and who demonstrate an interest in Azerbaijan and the project themes.

Guidelines for Both Programs:

In pursuit of the goals outlined above, the program will include the following:

- The open recruitment and competitive selection of a diverse group of youth and adult participants in the participating countries.

- Pre-departure and arrival orientations.
- Design and planning of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program on the specified themes and offer a thorough introduction to the host country's culture. Opportunities for the exchange participants to engage with their peers in the host country must be included whenever possible.
- Opportunities for the educators to work with their peers to help them foster youth leadership, civic education, and community service programs at home.
- Logistical arrangements, including accommodations, disbursement of stipends, local travel, and travel between sites.
- Homestay arrangements with properly screened and briefed host families for a significant portion of the exchange period. Criminal background checks must be conducted for members of host families and others living in the home who are 18 years or older.
- Monitoring of the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange, including proper staff supervision and opportunities for participants to share potential issues and have them resolved promptly.

- Follow-on activities in the participants' home countries designed to reinforce the ideas and skills imparted during the exchange program.

Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation document for more details.

Criteria for selection of all participants will be leadership skills, an interest in service to the community, strong academic and social skills, overall composure, and openness and flexibility. In addition, all participants must be citizens of the country from which they are applying and must legally reside in that country.

As noted below, the support of diversity is an important feature of Bureau programs. The delegation of participants selected for the program should adequately reflect the rich cultural, geographic, and ethnic diversity of the participating countries. Applicants should ensure that special efforts are made to recruit students from underserved populations and locales. Selection should reflect a preference for candidates who have not already spent a significant period of time overseas and who might

not otherwise travel abroad were it not for this program opportunity.

Given the youth of the participants, the award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the Azerbaijani, South Asian, and American teenagers have safe and pedagogically robust programs while visiting the other country. Staff, along with the adult participants, will need to assist youth with cultural adjustments, to provide societal context to enhance learning, and to counsel students as needed. Applicants should describe their plans to meet these requirements in their proposals.

Proposals must demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major program activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor categories. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package - this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) - for further information.

In a cooperative agreement the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The Department of State's activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

- 1) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 2) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 3) Approve the selection of final candidates and alternates.
- 4) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 5) Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 6) Represent the U.S. Government as the program sponsor at exchange events.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program and assist with participant monitoring through regular communication

with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Fiscal Year Funds: 2011

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,311,500

Approximate Number of Awards: Two

Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of funds, September 1, 2011

Anticipated Project Completion Date: 14-30 months after the start date, to be specified by the applicant based on the program design.

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of the Youth Leadership Program with South Asia and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional fiscal years before openly competing it again. Please note that this statement does not apply to the Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan.

III.) Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c) (3) .

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost

sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau cooperative agreement guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making two awards in amounts that exceed \$60,000 to support the program and administrative costs required to implement these exchange programs. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Proposed sub-award recipients are also limited to grant funding of \$60,000 or less if they do not have four years of experience in conducting international exchanges.

c.) The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

d.) Organizations may submit only one proposal (total) under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared

technically ineligible and will be given no further consideration in the review process. Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

IV.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package: Please contact the Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, Tel (202) 632-6421, E-mail LantzCS@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-11-30 when making your request. Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Bureau Branch Chief Carolyn Lantz and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-11-30 on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:
The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under

IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients and sub-recipients must maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database and have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Recipients and sub-recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in the CCR until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. ***All entities must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted.***

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must

include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their cooperative agreement activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of cooperative agreement activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify

nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State

ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5th Floor

2200 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037

IV.3d.2 **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law

104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the

program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people

trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.

4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including

survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$275,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. **Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:**

Application Deadline Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-11-30

Methods of Submission:

Applications may be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1.) In hard-copy, via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (i.e., Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.), or
- 2.) electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the above Reference Number in Box 11 on the SF-424 contained in the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) of the solicitation document.

IV.3f.1 Submitting Printed Applications

Applications must be shipped no later than the above deadline. Delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet and delivery people who are identifiable by commonly recognized uniforms and delivery vehicles. Proposals shipped on or before the above deadline but received at ECA more than seven days after the deadline will be ineligible for further consideration under this competition. Proposals shipped

after the established deadlines are ineligible for consideration under this competition. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of application. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery to ECA via the Internet. Delivery of proposal packages may not be made via local courier service or in person for this competition. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Only proposals submitted as stated above will be considered.

Important note: When preparing your submission please make sure to include one extra copy of the completed SF-424 form and place it in an envelope addressed to "ECA/EX/PM".

The original and six copies of the application should be sent to:

Program Management Division

ECA-IIP/EX/PM

Ref.: ECA/PE/C/PY-11-30

SA-5, Floor 4

Department of State

2200 C Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20037

With the submission of the proposal package, please also e-mail the Executive Summary, Proposal Narrative, and Budget sections of the proposal, as well as any attachments essential to understanding the program, in Microsoft Word, Excel, and/or PDF, to LantzCS@state.gov. The Bureau will provide these files electronically to the Public Affairs Sections at the relevant U.S. Embassies for their review.

IV.3f.2 - Submitting Electronic Applications

Applicants have the option of submitting proposals electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located

under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7AM - 9PM Eastern Time

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a

submission receipt and a submission validation.

Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. REVIEW PROCESS

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in

the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau cooperative agreement panels for advisory review.

Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below.

1. Quality of the program idea: The proposed program should be well developed, respond to design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. Program planning: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved, addressing the three main components, i.e., participant selection and preparation, exchange activities, and follow-on activities. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Participant recruitment and selection should be thoroughly explained. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail. Proposals should also provide a plan for Bureau-supported follow-on activities to help the participants apply what they have learned.

3. Support of diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

4. Institutional capacity and track record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal

should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants or cooperative agreements as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance.

5. Program evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

VI.) Award Administration Information**VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. **Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with a hard copy original plus one copy of the following reports:

- 1.) Interim program and financial reports, as required in the cooperative agreement;
- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet with all program reports.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VI.4. Program Data Requirements:

Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. As a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Draft schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the activity.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Carolyn Lantz, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, Tel (202) 632-6421, Fax (202) 632-9355, LantzCS@state.gov. All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/PY-11-30.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative.

Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding.

Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal

budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Ann Stock

Date

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State